

Non-Partisan Congressional Budget Office Says Legislation, Posted Online Today, Will Cut Deficit By \$1.2 Trillion Over 20 Years, Cover 95 Percent of Americans

(WASHINGTON, DC) - On the same day that the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office announced that health care legislation before Congress will cut the federal deficit by more than \$1.2 trillion over the next 20 years, Congressman Russ Carnahan today announced he will vote yes to hold insurance companies accountable, control costs and give everyone access to the same kind of insurance available to Members of Congress.

In a speech delivered on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, Carnahan told the story of Stacy, a constituent from St. Louis who wrote to him about her grandmother, who died without preventive coverage two years ago, leaving her grandfather broke due to medical debt and her family wondering why her medical problems couldn't have been detected sooner:

"Please vote for health care reform. For my grandmother,' Stacy wrote to me," said Carnahan.

"Well, to Stacy and the thousands of other people I represent who are struggling to afford health care, I say: I will."

The new health care bill, which was posted online today at www.rules.house.gov, will stop insurance companies from denying coverage to people with preexisting conditions or dropping coverage for people who get sick; make health coverage more affordable for middle-class families; and allow individuals and small businesses access to the same kind of health insurance options available to Members of Congress. The new legislation also contains critical improvements on the bill passed by the Senate last month, including:

§ Improving Medicare coverage for millions of seniors by closing the prescription drug donut hole;

§ Increased assistance to help middle-class and low-income Americans afford to buy private insurance; and

§ The elimination of special "sweetheart" deals for specific states.

A new analysis released today by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office indicates the bill will reduce the federal deficit by \$138 billion in the next decade and more than \$1.2 trillion over 20 years, and provide health coverage for an additional 35 million Americans - or 95 percent of eligible Americans.

Carnahan condemned opponents of health insurance reform who are trying to mire down progress on an issue that impacts every American into a debate about process and politics:

"The American people have had it with the partisan bickering and so have I," said Carnahan. "Enough with the obstruction and the delay. The folks that want to play partisan political games with your health care and the insurance companies that have made record profits during this economic recession while sticking us with higher premiums all across the country need to get out of the way."

"It's time for every Member of this Congress to stand up and be counted. It's time to stand up for millions of Americans who are struggling with the rising cost of health care. I know where I stand. It's time for an up or down vote on health care now."

Carnahan's speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives will be available later today on his website at carnahan.house.gov.

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